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## REFLECTIONS ON THE EMERGENCE AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE TURKIC LANGUAGES

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**Annotation.** *The history of formation and stages of development of Turkic languages. Languages belonging to the Turkic language family and their most important linguistic features. The place of the Uzbek language in the Turkic language family and its features. In the period of independence, the issue of raising the socio-political position and prestige of the Uzbek language in the world community is discussed.*

**Key words:** *Turkic language, Orhun-Enasoy, the oldest Turkic languages, old Uzbek literary language, ancient Turkic monuments, comparative-historical grammar of Turkic languages.*

The earliest stage in the history of the Turkic languages' dates back to the pre-Christian era and encompasses the period up to the 5th century CE. In scholarly literature, this period is referred to as the era of the Proto-Turkic language and is generally divided into two stages. The first stage, known as the Altaic stage, covers the time up to the 3rd century BCE. The subsequent stage spans from the 3rd century BCE to the 4th century CE and is often referred to as the Hunnic period.

From the 6th century CE onward, the period of the Old Turkic literary language begins. This era marks the initial phase in the history of written Turkic languages, as it was during this time that the Turkic literary tradition in written form emerged.

The term Old Turkic literary language is used to describe the written language of the 6th to 10th centuries. The oldest surviving Turkic inscriptions originate from this era. The history of the Turkic languages — and particularly the Uzbek literary language — also begins with these ancient written monuments. This historical stage is typically divided into the following phases:

The language of the Köktürk (Gokturk) inscriptions, which includes texts written in the Old Turkic script during the First and Second Turkic Khaganates. These inscriptions include the Orkhon, Yenisei, Tuva, Talas, and Fergana monuments.

The language of written monuments produced during the Uyghur Khaganate and subsequent Uyghur states, which were composed in various scripts, including Old Turkic (runic), Uyghur, Manichaean, Brahmi, and Sogdian. These are collectively referred to in Turkological studies as the language of the Old Uyghur period.

The inscriptions related to the Old Turkic literary language are generally known as the Orkhon-Yenisei inscriptions, named after the river valleys where they were discovered. These texts were composed using runic and Uyghur scripts. The ancient Turkic runic script was typically carved into stone, metal, wood, and other materials. Among the most famous of these inscriptions are those dedicated to Kül Tegin, Bilge Khagan, Tonyukuk, Ongin, and Küli Čur, which date from the 5th to 10th centuries. Because the appearance of this script resembled ancient Germanic runes, European scholars classified it as runic writing.

The second stage of the Old Turkic period is referred to as the Middle Turkic stage. This phase, which spans the 11th to 13th centuries — encompassing the Qarakhanid state and the Mongol rule — marks the full formation and development of the languages of the major Turkic tribes and peoples. During this time, Turkic languages solidified into stable forms, exhibiting features closely resembling those of modern Turkic languages.

The Middle Turkic literary language developed within the Karakhanid state during the 11th and 12th centuries. This literary language remained in use until the early 14th century. The written language of monuments produced during the Karakhanid period is very similar to the language of earlier Old Turkic texts, indicating that traditions of the ancient written language were largely preserved, albeit with some variations.

The Karakhanid period also saw the emergence of many talented literary figures, including Yusuf Khas Hajib, Mahmud al-Kashgari, and Ahmad Yugnaki. Among them, Yusuf Khas Hajib stands out for composing the renowned work “Qutadghu Bilig”, which holds immense cultural and historical value. This work presents ideas on state governance, laws, politics, ideology, and moral-ethical teachings — ideas that remain relevant and valuable even today. In this work, the author emphasizes four key pillars of society: justice, state (authority), wisdom, and contentment.

Through “Qutadghu Bilig”, Yusuf Khas Hajib played a pivotal role in standardizing the norms of the literary language and made an unparalleled contribution to the development of Turkic literary expression. The text is notable for fully reflecting the features of the Middle Turkic literary language. This work served as a bridge between the Old Turkic and Middle Turkic stages, laying the foundation for the literary norms of the emerging Muslim period of Turkic literature.

The period of Old Turkic literary language encompasses the following stages:

The language of the Karakhanid period (the language of written monuments produced during the Karakhanid dynasty);

"Chagatai Turkic";

Old Khorezm Turkic (the literary language used in the Golden Horde and Khorezm cultural milieu);

Old Kipchak (the language of grammatical works and dictionaries written in Egypt, as well as texts created by Kipchaks in western Turkic regions);



Old Anatolian Turkish (a written literary language used by the Oghuz Turks in the 13th–15th centuries, which later evolved into Ottoman Turkish).

The Altaic theory, founded by the Russian orientalist V. Radlov, posits that in Altaic languages, consonants at the beginning and end of words are typically voiceless. According to this theory, the history of the Turkic languages begins in the ancient Altaic period, when the Altaic languages were presumed to be a single proto-language. This proto-Altaic language later diverged into two branches: Tungusic-Manchu and Turkic-Mongolic. Subsequently, the Turkic-Mongolic branch developed into two independent languages—Turkic and Mongolic.

The next phase in the history of the Turkic languages is the Hunnic period, which spans from the 3rd century BCE to the 4th century CE. The Turkic language of the 6th–10th centuries is referred to as Old Turkic. In the 6th century, Old Turkic emerged as a unified lingua franca for all Turkic tribes, spreading across Central Asia, Northern Mongolia, the Altai region, Khorasan, the Caucasus, Eastern Europe, southern Russia, and Siberia.

A substantial number of Turkic runic inscriptions (Orkhon-Yenisei) and Uyghur script texts from the 6th–10th centuries remain from this period. Many researchers agree that the peoples of Central Asia, Kazakhstan, the Altai region, Southern Siberia, and the Pre-Ural regions spoke Turkic languages as early as the 3rd–2nd millennium BCE.

The common lexical, phonetic, and grammatical features of this language have been preserved to varying degrees in all modern Turkic languages. As G'. Abdurahmonov has noted, the roots of the Turkic peoples trace back to indigenous tribal groups in Central Asia prior to the Common Era—namely, the Karluks, Oghuz, and Kipchaks. Each Turkic people and their respective language formed primarily based on one of these tribal groups.

Turkic languages hold a unique position among the world's languages, representing both ancient and modern Turkic peoples and ethnic groups. Today, Turkic-speaking populations are primarily found in Turkey, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Russia, China, Afghanistan, Iran, Tajikistan, as well as Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Germany, Cyprus, North Macedonia, Albania, the United States, Saudi Arabia, and other countries. According to data from the late 20th century, the total number of Turkic speakers exceeds 140 million.

The formation of the Old Uzbek literary language dates back to the late 14th and 15th centuries. Modern Uzbek literary language developed in the first quarter of the 20th century on the basis of the Karluk-Chigil dialects, particularly the Tashkent and Fergana varieties.

As stated earlier, Uzbek is one of the world's most ancient languages and belongs to the Turkic language family. This family includes Azerbaijani, Turkish, Turkmen, Tatar, Bashkir, Kyrgyz, Karakalpak, Uyghur, Kazakh, and other Turkic languages. The Uzbek language, the national literary language of the Uzbek people, consists of several dialect groups—Karluk-Chigil-Uyghur, Kipchak, and Oghuz—as well as numerous large and small dialects, each distinguished by specific phonetic, morphological, and lexical features.

In accordance with the Law "On the State Language," passed by the Republic of Uzbekistan on October 21, 1989, Uzbek was granted the status of the state language. Uzbek is predominantly spoken in Uzbekistan and is also widespread in Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Russia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, China, the United States, Germany, and elsewhere. As mentioned, Uzbek is closely related to other Turkic languages such as Turkish, Kyrgyz, and Kazakh. These languages are spoken by populations living in various parts of the world.

For instance, Turkish is spoken in Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Iran, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Russia, Germany, the Netherlands, France, Cyprus, North Macedonia, and other countries. By the end of the last century, the number of Turkish speakers worldwide was estimated to be around 55 million.

According to academician B. Ahmedov, the Uzbek people are one of the most ancient ethnic groups in Central Asia, with a history spanning nearly three thousand years. Consequently, the development of the Uzbek language can also be traced back that far, as the formation of a people is inseparable from the formation of their language. The Uzbek people and their language belong to the Turkic ethnic and linguistic family, and their development is closely tied to the broader history of Turkic peoples and languages.

The formation of the present-day Uzbek people and their language is the result of complex historical processes. The Uzbek people are among the most ethnically diverse of the Turkic peoples, with their formation involving contributions from 92 different tribes and clans, both Turkic and non-Turkic, as recorded in historical, scholarly, and literary sources.

Interest in the genetic and linguistic relationships among Turkic languages dates back to antiquity. It is appropriate to highlight the pioneering work of Mahmud al-Kashgari, who was the first to classify the Turkic languages. The classification and comparative study of Turkic languages gained momentum in the late 19th and throughout the 20th centuries, leading to the emergence of numerous taxonomies.

One of the sources on Old Turkic is the comparative edition of the monument dedicated to Kul Tigin, as well as works analyzing the linguistic features of this text, produced in Uzbekistan. In global Turkology, particularly within the Russian school, I. Kyzlasov proposed innovative perspectives on Turkic runic inscriptions, presenting views that diverged significantly from traditional interpretations. New theories have also emerged concerning the features of Old Turkic, which, collectively, have created the need to revise the textbook History of the Uzbek Language.

Old Turkic is closely connected with the historical development of Turkic tribes, their states, and their societies. Therefore, the study of Old Turkic evolved in close connection with other disciplines. First and foremost, Old Turkic is tied to history, especially ethnic history. Differences among Turkic tribes are largely identified through their linguistic features, making language a critical tool for understanding tribal history. Old Turkic is also linked with paleography, which studies the origin of ancient Turkic scripts, the diversity of alphabets, and

the influence of other writing systems on Turkic runic scripts. Furthermore, Old Turkic is intertwined with literature, as early literary monuments serve as sources for both the history of Turkic literature and the Old Turkic language. It is also closely related to historical geography, since regional variations in inscriptions reflect differing paths of tribal development.

Contemporary research continues to explore the early periods of Turkic language history. However, many complex and unresolved issues remain. These include periodizing the history of Turkic literary languages, conducting comparative studies, analyzing the development of Turkic languages after the Common Turkic stage, examining relationships and differences among dialects, and evaluating both intralinguistic and extralinguistic factors. Consideration of writing systems and cultural development is essential for addressing these issues effectively.

Questions about the linguistic relationships between early Turkic tribes such as the Huns, Khazars, and Bulgars, and the languages of the Chuvash and Yakut peoples, also await resolution. Addressing these questions may require referring to factual data from sources predating the Orkhon-Yenisei inscriptions.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, comparative studies of Turkic languages flourished. The Institute of Linguistics of the Russian Academy of Sciences, including its branches in St. Petersburg and Siberia, conducted significant research on the phonetics, lexicon, and grammatical structure of Turkic languages. Two major directions emerged in the study of Turkic language history: historical grammar and the history of literary languages. During the 1960s–70s, numerous monographs, textbooks, and manuals on Turkic language history were published. Research in Turkology developed in both synchronic and diachronic aspects. Extensive work was carried out in the fields of classification, phonetics, lexicology, semantics, terminology, lexicography, and grammar of the Turkic languages. Written monuments in Turkic were studied and published. Notable achievements were made in phonetics through experimental research, revealing the phonemic system, stress patterns, and intonation of sentences.

Research in Turkic lexicology and lexicography laid the foundation for both synchronic and diachronic analysis of the Turkic lexicon. In bilingual dictionaries involving Turkic and non-Turkic languages (e.g., Russian), attention was paid to representing lexical and grammatical features of the non-Turkic language through Turkic equivalents, translating idiomatic expressions, and identifying equivalents for prefixal structures, along with analyzing their semantic properties.

The morphology of Turkic languages, particularly the lexical-semantic, morphological, and syntactic characteristics of parts of speech, was investigated on a scientific basis. Categories associated with nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and verbs were studied in detail. Syntax was also a focus, with in-depth research into phrases, simple sentences, and compound sentence structures.

It is also crucial to explore the historical relationships between Turkic and non-Turkic languages. Since ancient times, Turkic peoples have coexisted and interacted with Indo-



European, Finno-Ugric, Semitic, Mongolic, and other groups. These interethnic contacts are reflected in language. Therefore, in addition to studying the influence of other languages on Turkic, it is equally important to analyze how Turkic languages have affected Germanic, Romance, Slavic, Mongolic, and Persian-Tajik languages, including identifying substrate influences.

Comprehensive analyses of the historical phonology and morphology of the Turkic languages are found in the works of M. Räsänen. Theoretical issues, both general and specific, have been addressed by researchers such as A. Emre and A. Dilâçar. A. Caferoğlu's History of the Turkish Language provides a scholarly analysis of the developmental stages of Turkic languages, beginning from their formation and continuing through later periods. The works of Mahmud al-Kashgari, Mahmud az-Zamakhshari, Yusuf Khash Hajib, Khorezmi, and Rabghuzi have also been examined.

The history of Turkic languages, and particularly the Uzbek language, encompasses a long and rich process of development. This history is closely interconnected not only with linguistics but also with many other disciplines such as history, literature, culture, and geography. It is essential for every Uzbek citizen, especially the younger generation, to deeply understand and appreciate the history and roots of their native language.

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